



Arlington Poet Laureate Committee

Date: April 1, 2020

Time: 1 PM

Location: Via Zoom (because of Coronavirus Quarantine)

Present: Liza Halley (chair), John Burt (secretary), Carol Band, Pamela Powell

1. **Status of Meeting** Because we were unable to meet in a public space, and because the meeting was organized at the last minute, we were unable to publicize the meeting beforehand in accordance with the Public Meeting Law, and will treat our formal actions today as unofficial.

2. **Report from Steven** Steven Ratiner has been very active and energetic as laureate. Most recently he is organizing a “Red-Letter Mailing.” Roman emperors would mark out special days in red letters on the calendar. Steven had proposed to mail “Red Letters” with selected poems to a number of Arlington residents on a regular basis. The coronavirus epidemic has forced this project to move on line, but he has gathered together a large email list of correspondents, who will receive a different poem every week, usually from a poet with an Arlington connection. He has established firm connections and programs with the Arts Center, with the Arlington International Film Festival, as well as running ongoing programs at the Library. He has so far been disappointed in the level of response from the Arlington Public Schools, which has surprised him because he has had such a long history of involvement with other school districts. We agreed to him him promote the Red Letter project, and offered to see what avenues might be open for working more with the public schools. Liza plans a further conversation with him this afternoon. We want him to know how happy we are with his work so far.

3. **Practical Matters** Steven has been paying copying expenses out of his own pocket. He can leave material to be copied at the Town Manager’s office, and it will be reproduced on the Town Manager’s copier (not on the copier at the Robbins Library).

3. **Succession of the Chair** Liza plans to step down as chair soon. We discussed who might be asked to join the committee as a new member, but have postponed the question of who will succeed her as chair. John suggested that Laura Quinney, who has published three books of poetry and teaches poetry at Brandeis, might be a good choice. (Addendum: he has

contacted her since the meeting, and she is willing to serve.) Since she will be replacing Liza, who is the representative of the Library to the Laureate Committee, Liza will seek guidance from the Library about how to proceed with this appointment.

The committee adjourned at 2 PM.